

Cricket 50

Chapter 50

The room was alive with laughter and chatter, the echoes of the hard-fought victory still fresh in everyone's mind. Aarav sat on the couch, surrounded by his teammates, some sprawled out on the floor, others perched on chairs. The atmosphere was light and carefree, with everyone basking in the afterglow of the win.

Ravi Bishnoi leaned back against the wall, grinning, "Aarav, that six you flicked off Josh Tongue—bro, I've seen KL Rahul do that, but you? That was insane!"

"Forget that," Kartik Tyagi chimed in, "how about Jaiswal's reverse sweep? I thought he was trying to play golf out there!"

Jaiswal rolled his eyes, laughing. "What can I say? I wanted to try something fancy. It worked, didn't it?"

Tilak Verma nudged him playfully. "Next time, let's see you try that against a fast bowler in the nets. We'll see how fancy you are then!"

The room erupted into laughter, and Aarav shook his head, smiling. "Alright, alright, let's not roast each other. Save that energy for the next game!"

As the banter continued, the door opened, and Rahul Dravid walked in, his ever-composed demeanor accompanied by a subtle smile. The room fell quiet as everyone turned to look at their coach.

"Ok, Young Lads," he began, leaning casually against the doorframe, "what a game that was yesterday. You all should be proud. But let's set that aside for a moment because I have some exciting news for you."

The players exchanged curious glances, the room buzzing with anticipation.

"You all know," Dravid continued, "that the IPL has become one of the biggest platforms in world cricket. It's a stage where young players showcase their talent, not just to India but to the entire world. And soon, the IPL auction will be held."

The players perked up at the mention of the IPL. Excitement rippled through the room as they leaned forward, hanging on to every word.

"You guys are eligible to submit your names for the auction," Dravid said, his smile widening. "If you get selected in the player pool, you'll have a chance to be part of the IPL."

There was a moment of stunned silence before the room exploded with chatter.

"Imagine getting picked by CSK!" Kartik exclaimed. "I'd give anything to bowl under Dhoni's captaincy."

"Forget CSK," Riyan shot back. "I can already see myself playing for RCB. Kohli at one end, me at the other. What a duo!"

Jaiswal grinned mischievously. "Rajasthan Royals for me. They need some class players, and who better than me, huh?"

Tilak clapped dramatically. "One crore goes to KKR for Shubman Gill!" he announced, mimicking an auctioneer.

The room burst into laughter, with Gill throwing a cushion at Tilak. "Keep dreaming, Tilak. One crore? I'm worth way more than that!"

Dravid chuckled, watching the team's excitement. "Alright, settle down, boys. Here's the deal. Your state boards have already agreed to allow your submissions. Now it's up to you. If you're interested, you'll need to contact your respective state boards for the next steps."

Everyone nodded, their minds already racing with the possibilities.

Dravid's tone grew a bit more serious. "Look, the IPL isn't just about the money. Yes, it's lucrative, but it's also about growth. You'll play alongside the best in the world, learn from them, and become better cricketers. If you ask me, you shouldn't miss this opportunity."

He paused, letting his words sink in. "If you're interested, start the process soon. Talk to your families, make your decision, and let the boards know. That's all from me. Enjoy the rest of the evening."

With that, he left the room, leaving the players to their thoughts.

The chatter resumed almost immediately, with everyone discussing the possibilities. Aarav, however, felt a tinge of nervous excitement. The IPL was a dream, but it also came with big decisions. He pulled out his phone and dialed his parents.

"Hello, Papa?" Aarav began, his voice steady.

"Yes, Aarav. What's up?" his father replied.

"There's something important I need to discuss," Aarav said, taking a deep breath. He explained the situation, detailing what the coach had said about the IPL and the process involved.

His father listened patiently before replying, "Aarav, this is a big decision. Are you sure you're ready for it?"

"I think so, Papa," Aarav said earnestly. "It's a huge opportunity. The exposure, the experience—it could change everything for me."

There was a pause on the other end before his father spoke again. "Alright, if this is what you want, we'll support you. But you'll need to stay focused. The IPL is a big stage, and it comes with challenges."

"Thank you, Papa," Aarav said, relief washing over him. "But there's one more thing. I'll need you to handle the paperwork with the state board. I'm not 18 yet, so I can't do it myself."

His father chuckled. "Leave that to me. I'll get it sorted. You just focus on your game."

"Thanks, Papa," Aarav said, his voice filled with gratitude.

After the call, Aarav felt a surge of determination. He quickly contacted the state board to inform them of his intent to join the IPL auction and coordinated the necessary steps for his father to complete the paperwork.

As the evening wound down, Aarav sat back and reflected on the whirlwind of events. The idea of stepping onto the IPL stage was exhilarating, and with his parents' support, he felt ready to take on the challenge.

This was just the beginning, and Aarav knew that bigger dreams awaited him. But for now, he allowed himself a moment to savor the excitement, the laughter of his teammates still echoing in his ears. The IPL was calling, and he was ready to answer.

Aarav stretched out on his bed, the events of the day still replaying in his mind. The atmosphere in the team room had been electric, but now, in the quiet of his hotel room, he felt a sense of calm excitement. His phone buzzed on the bedside table, drawing his attention to the missed call notification. It was Coach Rao.

"Coach Rao," Aarav muttered to himself, smiling as he dialed back. The phone rang twice before a familiar, hearty laugh echoed on the other end.

"Aarav, my boy! How are you doing, captain?" Coach Rao's voice was warm and cheerful, instantly lifting Aarav's mood.

"I'm good, sir!" Aarav replied, grinning. "It's great to hear from you."

"I was waiting for your call," Rao said, chuckling. "Congratulations on that 179! What a knock, my boy. You batted like a dream out there today. And on top of that, you picked up 3 wickets too! What's left for you to do, win a cooking competition?"

Aarav laughed. "Thank you, sir. It was a team effort. Everyone played their part."

"Modesty suits you, Aarav, but don't downplay what you've achieved today," Rao said. "Captaincy, runs, wickets—you've been carrying the team on your shoulders. How are you holding up, though? Not feeling too much pressure, are you?"

"Not at all, sir," Aarav assured him. "The team's been great, and honestly, performances like today's make it all worth it."

"Good to hear," Rao said, his tone softening. "Now tell me, how's the mood in the camp? Everyone celebrating the win?"

"Absolutely, sir," Aarav said. "The boys are in great spirits. We're all motivated for the matches ahead."

"Fantastic," Rao said, pausing for a moment before his voice grew serious. "Aarav, there's something important I need to discuss with you."

Aarav straightened up, sensing the shift in tone. "Yes, sir?"

"Are you submitting your name for the IPL auction?" Rao asked, his voice deliberate and measured.

"Yes, sir," Aarav said, the excitement evident in his tone. "I've already spoken to my parents and the state board. The paperwork is being taken care of."

There was a moment of silence before Rao spoke again, his voice carrying a note of pride. "Good, Aarav. I think it's the right decision. Now, listen carefully. I've been hearing some interesting things from the scouts."

"Scouts?" Aarav repeated, his heart racing slightly.

"Yes," Rao said, his tone brightening. "The Mumbai Indians scouting team has shown a lot of interest in you. They've been watching your games closely, and from what I've heard, if you go into the auction, there's a strong chance they'll bid for you."

Aarav's breath caught. "Mumbai Indians? Really?"

"Absolutely," Rao confirmed. "And it doesn't stop there. The CSK scouts have also been keeping an eye on you. You know what that means, Aarav. Two of the biggest IPL teams are interested. If you play your cards right, you'll be in a great position."

Aarav couldn't hide his excitement. "That's incredible, sir. I don't even know what to say!"

"Say you'll keep working hard," Rao said with a chuckle. "This is just the beginning, Aarav. The IPL is a huge platform, but it's also a big responsibility. If you get picked, you'll be representing not just yourself but your family, your state, and your country. Stay focused, and don't let the pressure get to you."

"I won't, sir," Aarav promised. "Thank you so much for the guidance and support. It means the world to me."

"You've earned it, Aarav," Rao said. "You've worked hard, and you deserve every bit of success that comes your way. Just remember to keep your feet on the ground."

"I will, sir," Aarav said, his voice steady with determination.

"Good," Rao said. "Now, get some rest. You've had a long day, and there's more work to be done tomorrow. Take care, my boy, and keep making us proud."

"You too, sir. Take care," Aarav said, smiling as he ended the call.

As he set the phone down, Aarav leaned back against the headboard, his mind swirling with thoughts of Mumbai Indians, CSK, and the opportunities that lay ahead. The excitement was palpable, but so was the weight of responsibility. He knew the journey ahead would be challenging, but tonight, he allowed himself a moment to dream.

As the night deepened, Aarav lay sprawled across his bed, scrolling through his phone. He casually flipped through cricket news, memes, and congratulatory messages about the match. Then, almost absentmindedly, he stumbled upon a post that jolted him upright.

"Breaking News: CBSE might announce results tomorrow morning or by noon!"

His heart skipped a beat. "No way," he whispered, staring at the screen as if willing the words to change. Suddenly, the reality of the situation hit him like a bouncer, and he bolted out of his room.

He barged into the next room, where a few teammates were chatting and lounging around. Without preamble, Aarav exclaimed, "Guys, CBSE results might come out tomorrow!"

The room fell silent as everyone processed the bombshell.

"What?" Abhishek blurted, sitting up straight. "Tomorrow? Are you serious?"

"Dead serious," Aarav replied, holding up his phone. "It's all-over social media."

Gill groaned, running a hand through his hair. "Man, I don't need this kind of stress right now."

"Tell me about it," Prithvi muttered. "We just played a match Yesterday. Can't CBSE give us a breather?"

Tilak leaned back, trying to appear casual but failing miserably. "We're already in a pressure cooker with cricket. Now this? Double pressure!"

Jaiswal chuckled nervously. "And here I thought facing fast bowlers was nerve-wracking. This is next-level tension."

Arshdeep, who had been quietly sipping water, finally spoke up. "What's the plan? Are we checking it together or...?"

Aarav nodded, pacing the room. "Yeah, together. No way am I doing this alone. We've all gone through the same grind—training, exams, matches. We face this together."

Parag, sitting cross-legged on the bed, looked up thoughtfully. "Remember how we all said during exams, 'Cricket is our life; results won't matter'?"

"Yeah," Abhishek snorted. "What a load of nonsense that was. Now look at us."

Everyone laughed, the tension breaking for a brief moment.

Prithvi smirked. "Imagine if we all pass, though. We could party tomorrow night!"

Tilak raised an eyebrow. "And if we don't?"

There was an awkward silence before Jaiswal piped up, "Then we party anyway. Stress relief, right?"

Gill shook his head, smiling. "Leave it to you to find a reason to celebrate no matter what."

Aarav clapped his hands, drawing their attention. "Alright, listen up. No one's opening that results portal alone, okay? We'll check it together tomorrow morning, deal?"

"Deal," everyone chorused, though their voices wavered slightly.

"Good," Aarav said, exhaling deeply. "Now try to get some sleep. And by try, I mean... good luck."

As the players settled into nervous chatter about their marks, Aarav returned to his room, his mind spinning. Between the IPL buzz and now the impending results, tomorrow promised to be a rollercoaster of emotions. For now, he could only hope that both would bring good news.